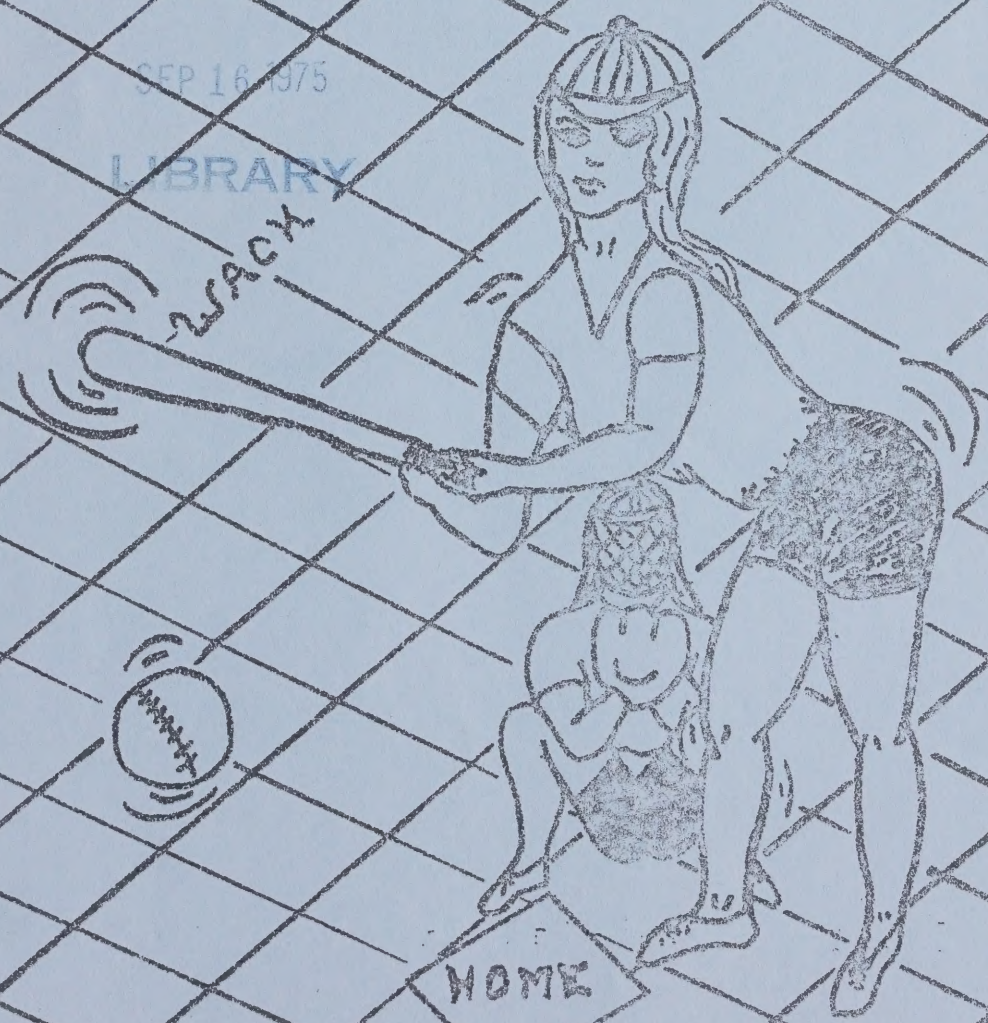
VANIER STAR

THE MISFIT BOOK

CENTRE OF CRIMINOLOGY
SEP 16 1975
LIBRARY



Vol. 3.
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BRAMPTON
ONT.

THE INSIDE OUTLOOK

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WOMEN IN PRISON

I don't know how to start, so maybe I can tell you of the changes I've been through and seen.

The Mercer was the first reformatory I was ever in, in the late '40's. At that time we had nothing, and really didn't see the outside until we were released. It was a maximum security place; probably the heaviest there was. Then, the Don with its electronic door, and there never was a temporary absence out of either of these places.

In the late '50's, I went to the Kingston Penitentiary for Women, the only one for women in Canada. Its drab grey walls were depressing and the inside just as bad. The only time one got out was to go shopping six weeks before one's release. After a few more trips there, I found the temporary absence programme beginning to take place, only for a few at a time, but it was a beginning that really went at a fast pace in the Pen. You didn't have to really earn a T.A! For a number of years, I did time in the maximum place.

In 1974, I received a break and got twenty-three months in this medium security institution. Here we were no longer numbers nor called inmates! We had a name and were referred to as residents! The T.A. programme was going well.

Communication with the staff was one thing one didn't see in the maximum place. At first, I found it hard to accept, but after a few days it became easier and I found myself talking to staff about the T.A. programme. I can't say I ever discussed personal problems with them; I never have, and probably never will.

In the Vanier Centre, a programme is set up for you; if you want to be involved, you get involved.

The T.A. programme is a big factor in your stay here. If you want to make it without drugs, it is entirely up to you. It's a good feeling to know you can do it without drugs.

After going from maximum security to medium to minimum, I got a working T.A. one week and had a job two weeks later. I have been working everyday for two months and feel that I can make it out there. It's a great feeling!

I can thank a lot of people for taking the time to understand me. If I did not get the break in Vanier, I would not know where I'd be now.

I guess I'll never know until I am discharged just how much good I've put into this time. But I know one thing: I'll really try and make it! Vanier has offered me more than the Mercer or the Pen. I'm tired of spending my life in jail, be it maximum, medium or minimum!

Bette B

PRESENTING VANIER

The Vanier Centre for Women in Brampton (less than 30 miles from Toronto.), represents what can be done with corrections in Canada. The centre is located in an institutuonal complex, with other provincial facilities close by. The building was designed to function specifically as a therapeutic community for females and wasopened in 1969. Most of the institutions in Canada for female offenders are more than 50 years old.

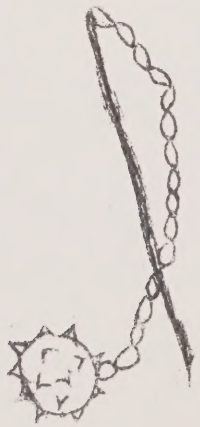
Vanier offers a variety of programs. The responsibility for rehabilitation lies with each girl. Inmates are assigned to cottages depending on the program planned for them. The educational and voccational programs are run by six teachers and the administrative team consists of six members with education in social work or nursing.

The team approach to corrections is reflected in regular staff inmate meetings. Meetings are held at least weekly and in some cottages meetings are held daily. The residents are invloved in the decision-making process for their cottages. They have their own newspaper,(the only publication in a provincial female institution that I am aware of) although most male institutions have inmate run papers.

Keys and head counts exist at Vanier but custodial duties are not the main focus of the institution. Residents with behavioral problems are sent to the Don Jail. The Don Jail is notorious for its old and crowded facilities yet some prisoners choose to go there. The inmate is allowed to return to Vanier when she is willing to co-operate with and participate in its program.

Submitted by Billie H.

Information from the
Women's Magazine
"Branching Out". (May 1975).



THIS IS A CHANCE TO LET OFF STEAM ON PAPER

(AND PERHAPS EARN SOME MONEY TOO!)

As one of their International Women's Year projects, The Ontario Government has awarded a grant to the Elizabeth Fry Society, Toronto, so that we can give prizes: 1: $300.00
2: $150.00
3: $100.00
4: $ 50.00 for the best told true life stories by females in Correctional Institutions in Ontario. Take a chance and try. You may enjoy trying to understand and explain how you feel, and as a bonus--YOU MAY WIN A PRIZE.

Guidelines for Contest:

1: Length - approximately 1500 words (6 pages-double spaced.)

2: Deadline - your story must be handed in to the contact person or mailed to Miss Helen Christie, Elizabeth Fry Society, 215 Wellesley St. E., Toronto, M4X 1G1 before November 30th, 1975.

3: Please include your name and date of birth

4: Feel free to express your reaction to your present situation; or speculate on how different things might have been. Tell about your family, friends, people and events that have been important to you. What matters most?

Judges will choose on the basis of style and content: facts and feelings, Your autobiography does not have to be in perfect English or French, but we hope that it will be expressed so that we can understand you, your life and your feelings.

GOOD LUCK!

Name of Project Contact person in your Institution:

Terry Angle

MY PERSONAL OPINION.

Invictus to Me...

The invictus programme based on "Reality" (Ha?) that was my first impression. When I was placed in this cottage I really resented it and that's why I've been so negative. Don't get me wrong, I still feel uncomfortable with the word "Reality". I find it very hard to relate to the Super Straight People. For I feel how can somebody straight really understand how I feel? It's like a shrink who reads many books, but he's never been "HERE".

The staff asks you to put"trust" in them and as soon as you do everybody knows about it. But that's the system and we can't change it. Sometimes I feel like a mechanical machine. Can't do this can't do that,do this, it's much better. I know right from wrong,but I was an unfortunate soul who got caught out there,(in here as well) and I've learned from my misconducts...

For some people though, I feel they mature more than anything in here. I still question why I was placed in Invictus??? For I believe I am mature: I started facing reality before I arrived here. But, they shot me down. I was putting on a front in their eyes, still sticking to my guns as to my goals. So there...

But, please remember, "I was born to be Me, and not a copy of you, whoever..."

To close I'd like to say farewell to the girls I've really gotten close to. Be cool and take care, I'll miss you all. We'll have to meet again, but not in here....

Janice.R.

MY REPLY

I promised Janice I would reply to her article and then send her a copy of the Inside-Outlook so that she could have an opportunity to read what I had to say. Let me say this, Janice:

--it's difficult to relate to anybody, not just the super-straight, but that doesn't mean you should give up. Just try harder.

--staff will give as much trust as they get.

--you might have been born to be yourself, but others have a right to a decent life, and what you do should not interfere with it.

Let me also say that I wish you the very best.

Terry Angle

The Health Centre de-emphasizes illness by helping the resident accept responsibility for her own health. Medical and nursing care is provided after the nurse assesses the degree of care needed. Proper use of health center facilities is encouraged through communication between residents, health centre and the cottages. This makes Health Centre a functioning part of Vanier.

On admission, the nurse obtains all pertinent information regarding your health history. Blood and urine samples, and an admission shampoo are done at this time.

As Health Centre is a busy area, medication times are set at certain hours to avoid conflicts with Doctor's appointments, and to decrease congestion. At one o'clock each day(except weekends) a nurse visits the cottages for assessments. A simple phone call by cottage staff, accompanied by an assessment sheet, is sufficient to obtain treatment at other medication times.

Health Centre staff are responsible for informing all areas concerned with regard to Doctor appointments and of admissions and discharges within Health Centre, Programme Centre, property, security and the cottages are notified in order to meke necessary arrangements for community treatment. Information concerning a resident's health is relayed to the cottage and social worker. Cottages are kept informed as to the treatment and medication of residents, and a brief medical summary is submitted to the resident's planning meeting.

Each nurse is attached to a cottage as a medical representative. As such we endeavour to attend House and Planning meetings. If any resident has medical or emotional concerns, an ideal time to consult the nurse is in the evening when she visits the cottages (from supper until nine-thirty P.M.)

The community facilities most frequently used by our residents include: Peel Memorial Hospital;Laboratories; X-Ray Departments; Brampton Optical (for glasses);and Pearce Laboratories (for dentures). Medical specialists are also available for consultation.

Trudy Edwards.

THE RESIDENT COMMITTEE

In a time and era when we find changes are forever prevalent, it would seem to me that we are often caught up in planning and preparing for the future and rarely have the luxury of time to reflect. In preparing this article in terms of looking at the origin of the role of a Resident Representative Committee, I found myself doing exactly this, reflecting on the past and comparing and assessing with the present.

Let us first take a look at the origin of the Resident Committee. How many of you would believe that the first Committee was formulated in the early sixties in a rather foreboding "Dickensian" building called the Andrew Mercer Reformatory for Women. Incredible as it may seem, that was exactly where the first Committee was formed under the title of 'Inmate Committee'. It was started by an enterprising young man who was Superintendent at the time.

When first introduced, there was some cynicism on the part of staff as to the value of such a committee, some wondered just how long it would last and whether it would be just a flash in the pan.

By 1968, the Inmate Committee had been thriving for a number of years and was recognized by both staff and inmates as the instrument for communicating program and policy procedures, problem-solving and future planning. The latter was especially in high gear at this time with the pending move to a new facility; namely the Vanier Centre. Some of the types of decisions the Committee was involved in at the time were selection of clothing, furnishings and drapes for the new Centre. Perhaps one of the most monumental decisions that was made at that time was to change the title of the Committee from Inmate Committee to Resident Committee. I believe it would be fair to say that just this simple change in terminology helped to remove some of the old stigmas and barriers between the staff and residents, strange to say (yet maybe not so strange) the label of Hacks! and Screws! diminished at the same time.

We are now into 1975, over ten years have passed and many many meetings have taken place, some of them have been difficult crisis interventions, some were a great deal of soul searching has been needed to take place, some others just plain beefing sessions (not too many now, I'm pleased to report), but perhaps the most valuable have been the meetings where new innovative ideas and programs have been produced by the Committee. To illustrate, one needs only to read some of the more recent minutes of the Resident Committee Meetings to recognize the exciting work the Committee is currently involved in, i.e.,

The Formulation of:

The 'Cadre' Committee, a committee consisting of Senior Resident reps from Vanier, A.T.C. and O.C.I. formed to discuss all proposals regarding shared facilities and programmes on a co-educational basis.

I would suspect that this particular project will be another historic milestone that can be credited to the Resident Committee Meeting.

S. Nicholls (Miss),
Deputy Superintendent.

HOW IT FEELS TO BE A RESIDENT REP.

Great! To me the responsibility of setting a good example is a credit to myself as well as the other residents. The programme at Vanier helps girls in a lot of different ways but I think to me my greatest help came from being a member of the Resident Committee. To be able to be part of the enlargement of the programme and speak your honest opinion whether or not its in agreement or disagreement. To have the trust of the residents and staff because they feel you are qualified to represent them and also having their respect of everyone, residents as well as staff.

How does it feel to be a resident rep? Since I've been a part of the committee I've gained my self respect back, trust, consideration for others as well as myself, more strength within myself, love, responsibility. I could go on and on but what I guess I am really trying to say - I feel like a brand new me.

"FILE IT UNDER BEING BORN AGAIN".

Lucille [redacted]

MY VIEW OF THE RESIDENT COMMITTEE

As a Correction Officer on a cottage who is not a member of the Residents' Committee, I'm impressed by the progress that has developed from this Committee. Over the years, I have seen how it has enhanced the harmony in Staff and Resident relations which is so important in the day to day living of our small community "Vanier Centre for Women".

On the cottage the Resident Representatives work hand in hand with the staff team. They communicate to our group any new programs or policy procedures we should be aware of and ask our opinions in any future programme planning. There is a healthy two-way flow between residents and staff where many honest opinions and concerns are shared. The Committee creates an open-line of communication, thus giving the feeling that we <u>are</u> working "together" and knowing that these concerns will surely be given consideration.

I have seen self-growth in the members who have had the opportunity to get involved in this Committee. They have assisted cottage staff on different occasions in problem areas through the knowledge they have acquired as Resident Committee Representatives.

In conclusion, as a staff member, I see the Resident Committee as a valuable part of our programme in the therapeutic setting here at Vanier.

M. Gagne, (Mrs.)
Staff Member of Kontiki.

Metal Work

The formation of jewelry and decorative objects is one of man's earliest achievements. The craft of jewelry making started before man could make his own clothing and it remains today as one of his few skilled occupations. In Vanier's activities program metal work is the newest of the courses offered. Simple tools and materials, coupled with a desire to create, are all you need to be able to turn out a beautiful object.

Girls begin by making the jewelry in copper, which is a very cheap metal and also easy to work with. Ideas and designs may be worked out in copper and then duplicated in silver. In this way a girl is able to learn the techniques without spending a vast amount of money on materials. The tools for these projects would be easily attainable to a girl when she leaves Vanier to go into the community. The relative simplicity of the tools makes them available at a minimal cost. For a very small financial investment a resident can make a beautiful item with very little direction after she has learned the basic techniques of metal work.

Theoretically, it is possible to make a profit quickly and honestly and can therefore be an alternative way of earning a living on the street. It is a positive outlet with an immediate return for one's actions.

Those of us involved in this course find it exciting and feel indebted to Gord Reeve for sharing with us the knowledge and skill he has of metal work, helping to bring out any creative possibilities we may have.

Lisa C.

Indian Group

I am a resident of Hochelaga, and I go to the Indian Group every week. To join this group, you must be Indian or part Indian. We sometimes have students in to talk about the old Indian ways, and also discuss how they live today. I'd like to thank the members and students for coming in and helping us to understand our Indian culture. Keep up the good work!

Most of the ladies in our group are very talented and like to do beading and leather work. Right now our main problem is the lack of sufficient materials to work with, but in the future we are hoping that this situation improves.

I feel that the Indian group is doing very well and I am proud to be a part of it. Thank-you for having me!

Shirly P.

Perhaps the girls here think the staff want to control their lives. Or perhaps they don't think that staff could care less. Whatever the veiwpoint, the group here from my position are a fantastic bunch of people. They are human- not jerks or nuts but real people people!

Whatever "society" thinks about people in jail they will never know what they are really like, until they have done what I have done. I have learned a great deal from all you people over the summer, and hope that you have learned from me also.

I've heard complaints about staff in Vanier but, staff also complain about some residents. The world's not perfect so what can we do? One thing I have found from working here is that I only wish that we had met before. And in another place, so that we could keep in touch!

Hopefully none of you women will return here, but being realistic I know some of you will return unfortunately, but hopefully, someday you'll find something that will make you ahppy, but that will also keep you away from Vanier. I'll never forget this place nor the people I have met here, and all I can say is, I wish you all good-luck in whatever you plan to do in the future.

Don't think back,
Go Foward!!!

Barry Randell.

My Feelings Towards Hochelaga

I really care and appreciate that I am a part of Hochalaga. I sincerely feel welcome, contented and at ease.

I work and get along well with staff and residents. I think all the staff are really beautiful people, they really put a hand in to be a part of the cottage and program,

I feel Hochalaga is most mature, together, and very considerate. Hochalaga is the best.

Keep it up Hochalaga!
Pat T.

Thanks to Hochie

I came to Hochelaga saying to myself,"I won't like it" and now that I'm here my feelings have changed. I guess the different change is because the staff in here really work with the girls. As for me the staff in Hochelaga is "LT" and, to them, thanks for putting up with me. "Really Cool". I have a lot of respect for the girls and staff in--- "Hochelaga".

Shirley P.

DRUG STORE PRICE LIST

TALCUM POWDER

Yardley	$2.50
April Showers	.79
Rexall Brand	.88
Coty	3.00
Johnson Baby Powder	.82
Revlon and	1.52
Revlon	3.00

CREAM SACHETS

Yardley	3.00
Coty	4.50

DENTURE ADHESIVES

Poligrip	.65
and	1.49
Wernets	.65
and	1.05

HAIR ROLLERS

Medium, large, Jumbo	1.29

BATTERIES

9 Volts	.89
"C"	1.29
"D"	1.29
"A"	1.59

HAND & BODY LOTION

Max Factor	2.95
Jergens	.79
and	1.39
Soft "K" Tender	1.39
Vaseline Intensive	1.39
Care and	2.10
Nice "K" Icy	2.25
Protective Lotion	1.79

MISCELLANEOUS

Nest Cream	1.00
and	1.50
Eyelash Curlers	1.79
Emery Boards	.39
and	.59
Nail Files	.50
and	.80
Cuticle Sticks	.39
Nail Clippers	.89

BATH AIDS

Calgon Bubble Bath	$2.59
Vaseline Intensive Care	1.98
Rexall Herbal Oil	1.99
Rexall Herbal Bubble Bath	1.59
Bubble Bath Bags	1.50
Bath Crystals	1.50

HAIR NEEDS - COLOUR

Miss Clairol Bath	2.47
Miss Clairol Shappoo Colour	2.47
Hairpainting Kit	4.95
Clairol Streaking Kit	7.50
Born Blonde Kit	3.00
Ultra Blue Kit	3.00
Born Blonde Toner	1.89
Nice 'n' Easy	2.47
Loving Care	2.47

SHAMPOOS

Rexall Balsam - (Conditioning, Herbal, Egg, Peach, Apple, Natural Coconut)	1.39
Breck - Dry, Oily and Normal	1.19
and	2.49
Earth Born - Dry, Oily, Normal	1.79
and	1.98
Revlon Balsam - Dry, Normal and Oily	1.95

DANDRUFF

ZPL	2.00
Sebulex	2.75

CONDITIONERS

Rexall	1.39
Revlon Balsam	1.95
Tame	.99
and	1.49
Breck	1.89
and	2.79

EYE MAKEUP

Eye Liner Brush	2.00
Tweezers	.60
and	.95
Eye Makeup Remover Pads	2.75

DRUG STORE PRICE LIST - Cont'd.

MAKEUP

Love: A little Colour	$2.50
Cream Makeup	2.85
Cheek Gel	1.95
Revlon Liquid	2.50
and	3.75
Cream	3.50
Powder Brush	4.50
Yardley - Liquid	3.00
Whipped Cream	3.50
Whipped Blusher	3.50
Cover Girl Liquid	1.75
Powder Blusher	1.90
Max Factor Liquid	3.75
Whipped Makeup	4.50
Whipped Blusher	4.25
Waterproof Blush	3.95
Waterproof Makeup	3.50

Both in plain and shimmering Shades.

FACE MAKEUP FOR BLEMISHES

Pure Magic	2.50
Clearsil Cream	1.39
and	1.89

SOAP FOR BLEMISHES

Phiderm	2.55
Clearsil	.53
Neutragana	1.25
Alpha Keri	1.45

SOAP

Nivea	.49
Dial	.54
Caress	.55
Safeguard	.49

LIPSTICKS

Yardley Pot of Gloss	2.00
Love Regular	1.95
Love Cream	2.25
Revlon	2.50
Max Factor - Regular	2.50
- Cream	2.50
Coty - Regular	1.95
- Cream	2.75

MAYBELLINE

Mascara Cream	.49
Mascara Brush	2.10
Eye Pencil	.59
Eye Shadow Powder	1.60

YARDLEY

Mascara Brush	2.95
Eye Shadow Pot of Gloss	2.75
Eye Shadow Powder	2.50
Eye Liner Cake	2.50

NAIL POLISH

Love	1.35
Revlon	1.85
and	1.95
Max Factor	1.25
and	1.75
Yardley	1.95

EYE MAKEUP

Love: Mascara Waterproof	2.95
Big Brush	2.95
Eye Shadow Cream	2.00
Eye Shadow Powder	2.00
Revlon: Mascara Brush	2.95
Natural Wonder Mascara Brush	1.85
Eye Shadow Powder	2.05
	2.15
	2.25
Eye Pencil	1.55

Max Factor

Pure Magic Mascara - Brush	2.50
Comb	2.95
Eye Shadow	2.00
and	2.10
Mascara Comb	3.25
Brush	3.25
Eye Shadow - Powder	2.15
Eye Shadow Stick	2.50
Eye Crayon	2.50

POETRY

"ONE STEP AT A TIME"

One word at a time and the book is read;
One stroke at a time and the paint is spread;
One chip at a time and the statue's unveiled;
One step at a time and the mountain is scaled;
One thing at a time and that's done well...
Is the only way to exceed and excel ...

You can read;
You can paint;
You can sculpt;
You can climb;
You can do it by...
Taking one step at a time...

Submitted by:
Barbara. G.

I would like to state that the following paragraphs aremy own views and not meant to offend anyone.

When I came through the front doors of Vanier I was the most optimistic, arrogant person you could believe. I didn't give a damn about who I hurt or what I did to get what I wanted. All I cared for was myself. I can't say that I've completely turned over a new leaf as that would be as phony as some of the people that are here. I guess that there are a lot of phony people on the street that I know but never really thought about until I was faced with it every day as you are when you're locked up. Inmates say to each other, oh I won't say anything to that party so like a common goof of the block you confide in that certain party. They listen and put it in their memory while in the next breath waiting patiently for their exit to let their gossip out. Then when it's said to the next person its just said a little differently till it goes around to everyone and comes out like one big lie, compared to when it just began as the person's own feelings. The staff always say they are here to help you and only want your best interest. That is true in certain cases. But how can people really put their trust in the staff, when the staff are licsenced to tell? So how can people really expect you to trust when all this is happening? When kids come in and they don't look or act like others people, they're put down. It's not that they are different, its just that they have a weaker personality so they get hurt more easily than the stronger ones. In my own opinion if you are you then that's good but when you start trying to be something you aren't then that's bad.

Billie M.

Like a lot of people, I don't like good-byes. On top of that I'm not very good with words, but the time has finally come for me to say good-bye to Vanier; so here it goes.

In September 1972 I came to Vanier with a thirteen month sentence. Needless to say, since most everyone knows, I have never walked out through Reception doors and been able to say, "Free at last!"

In all my time here I've learned one important thing, only other people can make you feel like a worth-while human being. For me there have been a lot of those people, especially the two I'm going home to, John and our daughter. I hope that for each and everyone of you there is something out there worth going home to.

I've make a lot of friends while I've been here, some that I'M very close to, and I'll be sorry to leave them behind. July 7th for me will be like the beginning of a new and better life, hopefully one without any jails. I hope you'll have enough confidence in yourselves to be able to feel that way too when you'll find the same kind of happiness that I've found out of life.

To Betty B. and Barb and Casey, I want to say thank-you for being real people. I love you.
Mr. Doyle: I hope you don't feel bad but I'm glad I'm leaving yourVanier Hilton.

Good-bye & Good Luck

Mary T.

ME

Drink, Drink, how you stink,
You brought me down to the depth's of hell:
And when I tried to stop and think
You tried to drown me in a well.

The water's thick and murky there
God lifted His hand to save me:
And I came back sharp as a knife, cutting thr ough the horrible hell
To reach the top of the well.
And when I did, I saw the light,

I shed the clothes that held me tight,
Stood naked on the ground,
new warmth and love I found
to stay another day on earth
To help another to find the way.

Elizabeth M.

Under the blooming white roses
Chip, the blackbird, rested
On his feet between the blades of grass
Contemplating.
Whether to eat the worm or come back
And save it for another sun.
The mocking cry of another animal
Was heard by Chip, as he wavered
On his feet and his eye couldn't quite
Focus the cry behind the screen.
Chip waited in silence for another mockery.
But when none came, he busily
Broke the worm in two and devoured
Half of one before the chilling sound,
Once more struck his inner being.
Chip shook his wing, took a step,
Left his worm and desided to return
When no one would be there
To invade his peaceful solitude

Sue H.
June 17, 1975

for Lisa & Chip

"FREEDOM"

Through my barred windows;
I can see trees green;
The scenery is wide and pleasant;
Before me is a field of pasture;
And a little hill that limits my sight:

Sadness touches me;
I am within touch of the world;
World that draws my strength;
Within my reach I want to desperately grip;
Within my sight I want to hold;
Within my senses I want to feel;

Freedom! Freedom!
Touch me a little;
Touch me gentle;
Freedom touch my heart and soul;
Freedom! Freedom!

Barbara G.

I am a friend to all who love me
I am a keeper of th r peace
I am scared
I am living
I am a clown that no one sees
I am a believer
I am a singer
But no one hears me sing
I am important
I am sane
I am a creator when I'm happy
and a destroyer when I'm depressed
I am proud of what I'm doing
I am sad when things go wrong
I am happy when they come my way
I am strong
I am weak
I am no better then anyone else
I am a believer, I believe in my self cause
I love me, myself and I

Tara V.

LIFE

Tomorrow a new day
To cope in a different way
With the problems that come
I'll try to figure them out crumb by crumb
No matter what or who they come from.

It's not an easy world to live in
Neither is the place I've been put in
But I guess it's what I really asked for
It's just not like an every day chore
I've been locked up for five months or more.

But I guess I'll just have to live with it
No matter how many times I grit
It's all my fault I understand
But it's the people who'll put me where I'll stand
But all I can say is I hope I'll never end up in
another can.

Cheryl C.

To Steve, With All My Love

I sit and think I love you So.
And you should know that I'll never go,
But do you really know how much I care
And how when I'm out that you'll still be there?
'Cause if you're not then I think I'll die.
And till I'm dead I'll wonder why
You had to leave and go away -
What made you feel you had to say,
"Good-bye little one goodbye."
How I hate those words, I've heard them so much.
But they're not in your eyes and they're not in your touch.
So please don't say them, at least not to me.
'Cause you'd hate the girl I'd turn out to be.

Chris R.

Grow Up

They hurt you once,
They hurt you twice,
But you take it all in stride
They tell you "Grow up, little girl."
It's time to face your life.

But how do you do it?
Just how is it done?
These answers I can't comprehend.
But, some day I know
These answers will come
And I'll face them and not just pretend.

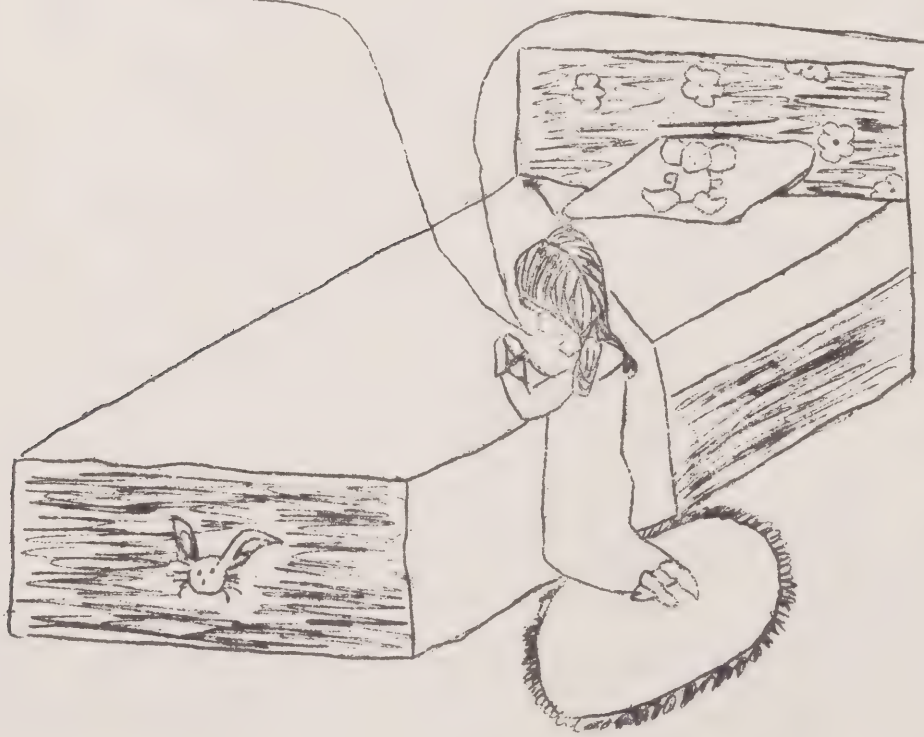
Chris R.

MY INSIDE PRAYER

As in a dream, there is no fear, for you can
Wake, laugh, and forget.
But in a real life it's different, for we
Suffer for our debts.
Do you remember when we were small, and
Everyone made a fuss.
And now we really need them, they
Don't remember us.
God! we need help, and a strong shoulder,
For pupils of strength we are few.
So please, if at all possible, could you
Teach us what to do?
Oh, help us understand this world, and
Help us keep our senses.
When we are lead down hell-paved paths,
And follow false pretences.
In you there's strength, and happiness,
And you never show conceit,
But we feel secure with you by our side,
With you thers's no chance of defeat.

AMEN.

Nicki S.



Awaiting the next interruption
(uneventful as it may be)
If existing emptiness, non-life
Void occupied with unfulfilled
Desires, visions, detachment.

Thoughts, hope of things to come,
Present not valid, meaningless.
Thoughts of past unalterable haunting,
Trying to retain sanity, dignity
Yet trying to remain humble in line.
Writing word of comefort to waiting one,
Trying to describe stilled, distilled
Emotions, actions, your very self.

Life goes on, the sun continues,
To rise and set and smile on the entire world;
But upon awakening from pleasant dreams
I realize nothing has changed, naught is alive,
This moment is but an extension
Of my lost waking moments,
This day but a repetition.

Oh! Release me, let me live!

Bev. S.

MATTER OF TIME

The first month of the year
Simple are the jail guards
Not like human monsters
To my convict state of mind:
The judge found fault in me
Cause to condemn me
He sent me away in haste
To pay a price of five years.
Now is my third year
It is visible I am beaten
Frowns have set upon my face
Gray hairs upon my head
Evenings are dark and lonely;
I hear many sounds of sorrow
Some piercing and some painful
Like someone squeezing my heart.
My heart is dried of blood
But my laugh will someday be heard,
Because I am the son of man
And I shall remain.

Submitted by: Barb. G.

ON EDUCATION

He always wanted to explain things.
But no one cared.
So he drew.
Sometimes he would draw,
and it wasn't anything.
He wanted to carve it in stone
or write it in the sky,
and it would be only him that needed saying.
It was after that he drew the picture.
It was a beautiful picture.
He kept it under his pillow
and would let no one see it.
He would look at it every night
and think about it.
When it was dark and his eyes were closed,
he could still see it.
When he started school,
he brought it with him,
not to show anyone,
just to have along like a friend.
It was funny about school.
He sat at a square, brown desk,
like all the other rooms.
It was tight and close and stiff.
He hated to hold the pencil and chalk,
his arms stiff, his feet flat on the floor,
stiff,
the teacher watching and watching.
The teacher came and spoke to him.
She told him to wear a tie
like all the other boys.
He said he didn't like them.
She said it didn't matter!
After that, they drew.
He drew all yellow.
It was the way he felt about morning,
and it was beautiful.
The teacher came and smiled at him.
"What's this?" she said, "Why don't you
draw something like Ken's drawing?
Isn't that beautiful?"
After that, his mother bought him a tie,
and he always drew airplanes and rocketships
like everyone else.
And he threw the old picture away.
And when he lay along looking at the sky,
it was big and blue and all of everything,
but he wasn't anymore.
He was square inside and brown,
and his hands were stiff.
He was like everyone else.
The things inside that needed saying
didn't need it anymore.
It had stopped pushing.
It was crushed.
Stiff.
Like everything else.

Submitted by:
Tafa V.

TO A GREAT FRIEND

We've spent a lot of time together,
That's why I'm hoping our friendship will last forever.
Well, we've had many a good time
So I guess it won't stop on a dime.
You're so cute in so many ways,
Which makes my life feel in a daze.
Whether it be rain or shine
Your frienship is more than fine-
Our frienship with me and you
Is one that I can honestly say is true-
Yet I wish we could have met under different circumstances
Whether is be swimming, parties or even at dances;
All I can say is I hope it doesn't end
Because to me your everybody's EXTRA SPECIAL FRIEND.

Barb G.

TO DEWEY

I seem to miss your presence each day
So, in deep thought I've called to say
Is there anything happening, and what is new,
Is your sun shining bright, and how do you do,
Now what is it that you've just thought,
Your mind is whirling, what has it caught?
My world is black and square, not round.
If we didn't pick from the wisdom tree,
A sense of reality we would see;
That the world can't hold what we think is in store
And we're sure to find it's a terrible bore.
So when you're down in the dumps, just give me a call
And you'll surely see, that its not bad at all.

Chris R.

O.P.B.

I have some feelings I have to let out
Before I start stamping my feet and shout.
Hey man, who the hell do you think you are?
Are you higher than the farthest star?

And what have I ever done to you
That you can make my life so blue?
Is it because you're supposed to care
About what I've done, when you weren't there?

When you said I had broken your law
I felt like punching you right in the jaw.
"You're a criminal" that's what you said;
Hey man, I think you must need a new head.

Because I know life is full of crime
Don't select me along that line
Cause I know that I've done wrong
But you make me feel like I should have been hung.

But I guess that's ok for you to say
But remember there'll come a day
When something that's never happened before
Will walk in your life and leave and X on your door.

No I'm not trying to threaten you
But I know just what to do:
Wait for the day when all is well
And pray that "you all go to hell!

Anonymous

OLD LADY

Old lady, bent so low in the field
From a distance you look so minute;
Why do you toil in the hot sun?
Must you water the plants, with your own sweat
Is there no one who can help you?
Your thin fragile body, so skeleton-like,
So dehydrated, so deprived of its natural moisture
Your distorted face, those aching black eyes
Seem to have incidents of the past imbedded into them
Old lady; you have fallen to the ground.
Get up, go sit beneath the tree, it is cooler
Old lady, why don't you rest?
Why do you pull plants from the soil?
You are destroying your total being.
You are laughing why do you laugh
Did you feel rain? I did not.
Now you offer prayer on your knees. Still you laugh
Why do you laugh, have you gone mad?
No no, please do not sleep out in the sun
Go to the tree, lie in the shade, it is cooler.
Finally I have reached you.
Your body it is stone cold
Why do you not wake when I shake you?
Now I understand why you laughed
Your life has been rounded with sleep.

Robert H.

LONELY HOBO

I am like a lonely hobo,
Whose soul is ravished by sorrow.
Silently walking, stopping in awhile
Under some window or in some doorway;
In humiliation turned to begging.
Approaching someone and hoping to get....

At night under blue starry lights
I walk alone through deserted streets:
Hoping to find something to eat,
Something to quench my thirst,
Someone to say a nice thing,
Or in passing, give a blessing to me:
Someone to sing in my ears,
Someone to kiss
Someone to embrace
Someone who cares
Someone who
Someone

Submitted By: Barb G.

A COMPLAINT?

I was asked by Terry Angle to write an item for the Newspaper as I was quite disturbed by the last issue that was published. I was shocked and offended to see the organ of an Institution such as ours bearing the honoured name Vanier, stooping to the level of trash magazines for so-called "humour".

As we look around the beautiful countryside we already see the reaping of the spring sowing- we are reaping exactly what was sown carrots from carrot seeds, beets from beet seed, wheat from wheat seed. It is an unchangeable fact in nature we reap exactly what was sown - only more of it.

The unchangeable Word of God - the Bible refers to this principle in the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Galatia- "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting". (Galatians 6:7 & 8)

As our Institution puts forth every effort to help the residents prepare for a brighter, happier, more useful future as citizens, let us point then to eternal principles of Scripture, and the sowing-reaping principle in particular, that they may reap the fruits of the Spirit which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law.

The justification of the existence of our Service is the betterment of society- the nation at large. The wisest man this world has known King Solomon, stated so many years ago, "Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people." Let us strive in everything we do and say to sow the crop we really want to harvest.

Joy Holman
Steno Pool.

AMERICAN IN VANIER

(Different strokes for different folks) pg.26

Here is how I feel being an American citizen in Vanier: Well, I do have to say it really is different. The first thing that was said to me when I was taken into custody was that I didn't have any rights because I was an American citizen: To a certain degree I can go along with this, because I have no rights to be here.

During my stay at Vanier I have found some very difficult times, but I know I am a strong person, so I began dealing with these matters. I refuse to be weakened, and I have adapted to the Vanier program. I feel I have lost more than I could ever gain during my entire incarceration in Canada, and words alone could never explain these feelings.

So I have to say this has been one hell of an experience for me. Vanier has very good programs here for the residents, but for myself I feel that an American can't profit from the program here. Take for example; Cosmotology program. If you received a certificate from here it might not hold up in the States, because it wouldn't be fully accepted. A person might be required to start from the top, and pay their tuition through school to take this course and they would go through a much longer program.

A certificate that a person would receive from Vanier Centre, really wouldn't get its full and proper recognition. But there are good points about Vanier. Residents get to know the staff better and you work in smaller groups therefore, you get to know residents and proper attention is given to individual residents.

Unfortunately Vanier can only have a limited number of programs since the resident population can only be 120. This limited program provides too much spare time. What I would like to see would be such programs as a Registered Nursing program, Data Processing, and a program that would provide a Vocational School Certificate.

Vanier is also a small institution that everyone gets to know too much of other people's business, and this can cause disruption of personal affairs. I should mention that I have been to larger penal institutions in the States where the population is much larger. They have bigger and more variety in their programs for women. But, they also have problems of control, (for example) ("RIOTS!).

There are also points of comparison between the two systems, but one must realize that the laws of the United States are far different from the Canadian laws, (for example), in the States you can get Twenty to Forty years on drug charges, while here in Canada the sentence is much lighter. Yet the sentence for car theft is considerably more severe than in the United States. Therefore who can judge which is "better " when it is in the eyes of the individual.

JO-ANNE M.

During My Stay In Vanier

The first time I came to Vanier was in 1971. I was only here a short while, so I really didn't get to know Vanier. I never thought I would ever see this place again, but four years later, I'm back again.

9 I arrived in February of this year. I proceeded through the orientation procedures; after thirty days I was transferred to the Don Jail, for serious reasons that I wish could have been prevented.

I am an American and because of this I don't have the exact right of the other girls of this Institution and it's very understandable. I realize that I can't expect to have some of the privileges that are given to the other girls because there is a great risk involved. But I also do not wish to carry the label "Security Risk" because I am from another country. I understand this Institution has had trouble dealing with other Americans in the past, but every American is not the same and should not be responsible for the others' mistakes. I understand the Ministry has to protect itself, but there's a better way than to shift the weight from one to the other, I'm quite sure.

I very much want to be given a fair chance to prove myself and I will do this to the upmost of my ability. Since being here, I have been given the chance of going out on group outings. I appreciate this and hope it will continue. When the time comes, I will also appreciate that staff is feeling at ease and more relaxed with me. I trust myself and taking off is just not in my plans, so it makes me feel sad knowing a lot of tension is around. I don't fault the officials or staff because they do have to really know a person to put their trust in a resident.

I realize that if I should escape and get across the border, I couldn't be brought back, but I also know this is one chance I do not wish to take. I was sent here to complete a sentence for the crime committed, and this is what I wish to do.

I feel very much that I am benefitting from the program in Vanier. I've never been incarcerated this long before, so I've had plenty of time to stop and take a good look at myself. I know where I'm at and I know where I'm going and I do not wish to spend my life going from jail to jail. So it's either change my life or go this same route--I wish to change and I have changed.

From this whole bad experience I owe a lot of thanks to Canada; it really made a believer out of me. Thank you.

Pat T.

CHOCOLATE BARS
Crispy Crunch.....20
Coffee Crisp.....20
Choclate Raisins.....20
Licorice Nibbs.....20
MacIntosh Toffee.....20
Maple Buds.....20
Planters Peanuts.....10
Smarties.....20
Snack Bar.....20

CERTS
Asst.Fruits.....20
Wintergreen.....20

GUM
Dentyne.....15
Juicy Fruit.....15
Spearmint.....15

LIFESAVERS
Rum & Butter.....15
Five Flavours.....15
Spearmint.....15

HOSTESS POTATO CHIPS
Plain.....15
B.B.Q.....15
S.&.V.....15

BAGGED CANDY
Fruit Drops.....25
Clear Mints.....25
Scotch Mints..sm.....25
Humbugs.....35
Ju-Jubes.....35
T.V.Popcorn.....25

POP
Coke.....20
Fresca.....20
Ginger-Ale.....20
Koll-Aid.....20
Orange.....20

SMOKING SUPPLIES
Cigarette Papers.....07
Export Tobacco.....55
Daily Mail Tobacco.....55
X-Mas Cards.....10
Birthday Cards.....25
Birthday cards.....35
Greeting Cards.....60
Export Tubs.....1[illegible]5
Export Plain.....57
Rothman Filter.....58
Export "A" Filter.....57
Cameo Menthol.....58
Book Matches.....2@01
Plastic Cigarette Cases.....19

TOILETRIES
Bobby Pins.....18
Kleenex Regular White.....25
Kleenex Boutique.....45

TOOTHPASTE
McLeans GIANT.....56
Pepsodent.....54
Crest.....54
Colgate.....54
Polident.....54

SHAMPOO
Alberto V.O.5 Hairdressing.....90
Head & Shoulders.....76
Johnsons Baby.....76
Nivea Cream.....64
Noxema Cream.....95
Q Tips.....45
Johnson's Baby Oil.....85
Johnson's Baby Powder.....1.16

DEODERANT
Ban.....69
Arrid.....53

SOAP
Dial.....28
Baby's Own.....28
Lux.....28

LIPSTICK
Red Gone Bright.....34
Soft Coral.....34
Pearly Pink.....34
PLAYING CARDS.....1.10

WRITING SUPPLIES
5 Lined Sheets.....set....04
Pad Large Lined.....78
Large Unlined.....98
Thin 8x10.....17
[illegible]
[illegible]
Legal Size.....3for02
STAMPS.....08
Pens- Bic.....24

The following items may be purchased in the Canteen but must be received by the Correctional Officer, to be kept for your protection and use on the Cottage.
Nail Polish Remover.....30
Hair Spray.....9[illegible]

NUTRITION

One of the country's best known nutritionists was Adelle Davis. Her best known books are "Let's Cook It Right", "Let's Eat Right To Keep Fit", and "Let's Have Healthy Children". As Adelle puts it, "nutrition is a personal matter," as personal as your diary or income tax report."

Nutrition can determine how you appear to others and to yourself. "Lets Eat Right to Keep Fit" is a book compiled with the idea in mind that any adult may find fitness through a proper diet. The essential vitamins and minerals are dealt with in detail along with many recipes geared to cooking to feel fit.

I used one of Adelle's recipes religiously for about eight months and found amazing results. It is a health drink called "Tiger's Milk". This drink may be used as a breakfast supplement, but is mostly a body builder and is recommended for people who suffer from extreme fatigue. It is rich in the B Vitamins.

TIGER'S MILK

1 qt. milk, preferably certified whole
1 tsp. to ½ C. brewer's yeast, depending on whether you are a beginner or a veteran. (This should be increased weekly.)
¼ to ½ C. powdered skim milk or soya flour
½ can frozen orange juice or ½ C. apricot nectar or frozen berries or ½ of a banana or 3 or 4 tbsp. chunky pineapple or any strong flavoured fruit, or blackstrap molasses.

Health Building Ingredients To Be Added If Desired

1 or 2 tbsp. salad oil (it cannot be tasted if the oil is fresh)
1 tsp. or more of calcium gluconate or powdered bone
1 tbsp. or more of soybean lecithin
several tbsp. of wheat germ

In making this I use all of the above with a little variation in the fruit. The trick in mixing this is to pour approx. 2 cups of milk into the blender, start the motor then add the dry ingredients, juice or fruit. About every four days I make up a batch of Tigers Milk, store it in the fridge and each morning freshen it up with some fresh fruit, remixing each small portion in the blender. You will have to be introduced to the yeast slowly but as the weeks go by you will find you are able to add larger amounts to the drink. One reason for taking yeast in small amounts at first is in case you're digestion is faulty; it may blow you up like a zepplin. For all practical purposes brewers yeast is the cheapest and best source of vitamin B. Yeast contains almost no fat, starch or sugar. It's excellent protien sticks to you're ribs, satisfies the appetite and gives you pep to work off unwanted pounds. If any food is said to be reducing, yeast is that food. Tigers Milk is one way of taking in the yeast you need for a day. Persons suffering from heart diseases need lecithin, as it breaks down the cholesterol in the system. Wheat germ and liver are two more ways of taking in the B vitamins. These vitamins are sometimes called the anti-fatigue or anti-stress vitamins. They do just that, especially when taken daily in a drink such as Tigers Milk. Once you get on to it you'll enjoy it and miss it when you run out of the necessary ingredients.

NUTRITION (con't)

Here is a letter that was written to Adelle by a young man who was suffering from extreme fatigue. He wrote this after consulting with her and she had suggested in his case to eat ½ lb. of liver each morning with a glass of Tiger's Milk. He did his best but sent her this complaint:

"My dear Adelle, it is plain hell to follow you're directions;
But I do try hard, avoid all lard and all the fine confections.
There is so much to encourage and much to intrigue,
So much to be grateful for this lack of fatigue.
With devotion to you and in spite of my pride...
One thing that I can hardly abide.
In rising each morning, at the clang of the clocks,
And facing the white vastness of the icebox,
I withdraw with fright and begin to shiver,
On seeing that mountain of slippery liver.
But once it is down, me eyes open wider,
And I can drink deep of the milk of the tiger."

Lisa C.

VARIETY NIGHT IN VANIER

A GREAT SUCCESS! The residents of Vanier along with the Rec. staff put forth an amazing performance Saturday night, Aug. 2nd, to the delight of the audience.

Prizes were won by all with the first prize going to Elsie C. for the greasiest performance by a resident. She appeared as a 1960's grease rock star. The performance was so believable that it won her a tube of Brylcream. The best over all performance went to cottage 4 for their skit. It was a takeoff the the much talked about cottage 3 housemeetings. This was a good cottage effort as all members of 4 participated in the skit. The children's theatre award went to cottage 2 for their humorous interpretation of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Elizabeth N. recited a poem which told her feelings on alcohol and what it has destroyed in her life. There was a musical participation by several girls; piano, guitar, and Heidi's daughter accompianed on the accordian. I'm sure Vairety Night was enjoyed by all; residents, staff and staff's family and friends. Oh, and not to forget the modern dancing by Lucy T. and Joanne M., which was difficult to describe; so we shall say it was the most sexual, stylized, syncopated, sultry, syncronized, scintillating performance of the evening.

Lisa C.

"A LETTER FROM VICKI"

This isn't going to be the easiest article I have ever written but it has to be one of the most sincere on my part. I have to be careful about how I express my thoughts and feelings on life "out here" because if I make it sound too good you won't believe me and if I make it too full of obstacles you won't want it. I guess I'll tell it like it is and hope to God it says something good to some part of you.

A lot of you know me but for the ones who don't, I have spent 13½ years in institutions and am totally dedicated to making sure it doesn't happen again. Granted, in that 13½ years I got free aspirin to go with the migraine headaches that are usually included in the government issue. Then there's the free kotex. Wow! Do you realize how much money was saved on that alone?

But somehow I'm left with the feeling that somewhere along the line a person has to decide what they want out of life. You can only go for so long living with the fact that you are functioning as half a person. You can only laugh at the fools on the outside for so long before that little voice inside of you that knows the truth insists that you re-evaluate your reasons for being here on earth. Life seems pretty long sometimes but it isn't, so you have to decide while you still have a fair amount of it left to work with.

I guess the first problem a person leaving jail with high hopes has to contend with is the fact that you are not going to be the centre of attention. You're not going to be handed three meals a day, you're not going to have people watching your every move (thank God), you're not going to be called by your first name by the neighbours right away and above all you might not even be able to find someone who really cares about you.

All of a sudden you are very much your own person and even though that's the greatest thing in the world to be it can be dammed lonely until you become familiar with your own little corner of the world. An important thing to remember is that no one owes us anything except the right to be here, and people have their problems too. Most of these people are basically like us. Knowing that makes meeting strangers a lot less scary, believe me.

How many times have we said, "I just can't talk to square johns"? My interpretations of a "square john" is anyone cursed with tunnel vision. Anyone who will not let themselves remain open enough to allow for human frailties in themselves or others. The ones who believe they are here to sit in judgement on the human race. Once they relax enough to recognize the pain and the need in others then they have to deal with their own, and they can't do that! So please don't be afraid of these people. They can't help you but they can't hurt you, either. These people are not just among straight society; we have quite a few among our own kind. The rest are not "square johns", they are people who hurt just like we do.

In the criminal society we justify a lot of ugliness in order to be able to live with ourselves and each other. I have made so many excuses in my life it makes me sick to think about them. For example, look how mad we get when we're robbed or when someone we know or love gets beat up or killed? Are we hot then! We say, "How low can people get?" Isn't that funny when we've been doing the same things to other people all our lives?

Of course it makes us feel good to be able to find someone lower than ourselves, doesn't it? I mean after all, there's nothing lower than someone who will beat their own kind. Have you ever considered the fact that everyone is our kind? We've been robbing and terrorising people who are from broken homes, people who have been raped, deserted, stepped on, people with hearts that have been broken just like ours. Even little kids have gone without food or parents because of our misplaced hate. Just because someone way back in our childhood hurts us so badly we have gone through life punishing ourselves and other innocent people instead of realizing that the person who hurts us so badly wasn't capable of giving us anything because they didn't get it either when they were supposed to. One of the points I'm trying to make is that the worst thing we do is deny our obligation to the human race. We can make things better or worse so why not try to make it better? We have to stop feeling sorry for ourselves and start living. The past will never be wrapped up in a neat package with FINISHED BUSINESS on it, but we can put our experienced to good use.

I guess the next problem is the responsibility of paying your own way in the world legally. The way prices are now it's not easy but it's possible. Being a booster for years I get this weird feeling in the pit of my stomach (or my wallet) when I'm standing in a store with an article in my hand and no clerk anywhere. It would be abnormal if it didn't cross my mind how easy it would be to drop it in my purse, but there's another feeling in me that's a lot stronger that says "Pay for it or you're right back where you started".

For years I used people too so I've had my moments with well-to-do generous men. It's very hard to say no thank you when you're broke and some nice man offers to pay for everything. All you have to do is smile, pretend you like him a bit and cash in on his loneliness. That would also put me back where I started because I'd be smothering the realness in me for something material. People like us can't afford to be less than real even for a minute because while we're pretending, we're making ourselves weaker. It's a rude awakening when you realize that the only way you can make it in the world is by screwing people figuratively and literally.

Working isn't easy but it's such a nice feeling to know that you're pulling your own weight and nice to know you're not going to get arrested when you put your hands on your pay check. Working isn't fun most of the time but it is very necessary. No job could be worse than things I've done for money in the past, especially with a drug habit to support. The desperation that comes with <u>having</u> to get a certain amount of money ($100.00-$150.00 a day) before you get too sick to do anything has got to be one of the worst feelings in the world. Or the times I <u>was</u> sick and had to go and get it. That's what I call work.

While we're in jail we tend to leave out all these things when when we talk about the "good old days". We play up the wonderful feeling drugs give us and play down the desperation and misery that go hand-in-hand with any addiction. Why do we do this? Because we need to feel that we've done something right? Or because if we say it wasn't worth it we'll have nothing left? Or is it simply because we feel that we have to accept it because there isn't anything else for us? Everyone has their own answer to that one. Mine was that I didn't know anything else. It was too painful to tear my eyes away from what I was doing and watch families laughing in their front rooms or watch boys and girls walking along holding hands. I didn't think any boy would want someone who had found out about sex when she was four. No, I didn't look up too often in those years. That was before I found out that those people had been through things just like I had. When I found out that I was just as capable of having what they had if I could work up the courage to work for it. And when I heard faint whispers here and there saying, "we understand." Then a few more joined in saying, "let us love you, Vicki". That's when I found that I didn't have to be where I was any longer. All I had to do was admit that I needed help, and that has got to be the hardest thing in the world to do.

When I went to the Penitentiary in 1970, I was determined to ask for help in every way possible. I decided to drop the walls I had built so carefully all my life and let my feelings out no matter how silly it may sound or feel. If I felt like crying I didn't cover it up with a joke and if I didn't know something I asked for the answer instead of letting on that I knew everything. Gradually the answers came along with some beautiful people who held my hand all the way through the nightmare. When I left there on parole I stayed away from drugs and the whole scene for a year. What happened? Well, I made the mistake of leaving there with the idea that I had it made, that I didn't have any more growing to do. You always have to keep asking questions in order to grow. Once you get too self-satisfield the pressures start building up again. Every day you have to try to learn more about yourself and other people.

No, asking questions and crying in the right places isn't a sign of weakness. It just says you're human. It only becomes a weakness when you use it to get your own way or as a constant bid forb sympathy. Asking for help is often classed as a weakness too, but you can't get anywhere until you admit that you can't do anything alone. Or until you admit you've made mistakes. Making mistakes is as human as crying so don't try to deny them because you'll just make a fool out of yourself.

If interested at all in having people's respect, admitting mistakes and trying to do something about them is a good way to begin earning it. And whether we want to admit it or not, we care what people think of us. While I was in Vanier I can't remember too many people who didn't go and get their evaluations and read everything in them very carefully. Needing approval is also very human. I sure hope this doesn't sound like preaching to anyone because it is meant to be a sharing experience, nothing else. I just feel so darned good about the way my life has become that I don't want to keep it to myself.

"A LETTER FROM VICKI" (con't)

It's funny that the more a person <u>really</u> cares about themselves the more they care about other people. For the kids reading this I want to somehow help you avoid 20 years of misery that wasn't at all necessary, and for the older people I want to say that all pain can be re-channelled into something beautiful. I'm 34 and I feel good about it because I'm turning all those years into something good. How many women are happy about being 34? Check with me again when I'm 50 (groan). Only kidding; age means absolutely nothing when you're <u>really</u> alive.

Another major problem is thinking that everyone knows where you're from when you leave prison. You always feel like people are looking at you when all you're usually getting is a casual glance from someone not much different from yourself.

The reason I keep emphasizing this is because you have to believe it before you can be a part of society. They are only different insofar as they are weaker or stronger then we are (or just as weak or just as strong).

And as for them not "knowing where it's at", as we often say; well, where is it at? If you mean they don't think being in prison all our lives is too hot of an idea then no, I guess they're just not ready for people as hip as we are. After all, we belong to the "in crowd" don't we?

There's no sense kidding ourselves: a lot of those people don't believe there's a hope in hell of us making it. They wouldn't hire us to babysit their kids, they wouldn't hire us in their companies and they don't want anybody else telling them that they should. You'll find them everywhere you go. I don't know who are more dangerous, the ones in the prison system or the ones out here. It's fun trying to prove these people wrong.

The people to remember are the ones who do understand or try to understand, the ones who know that there is something beautiful in every person, and the ones who believe that love can cure almost anything. We can't leave everything up to them though, we have to meet them halfway.

Last, but so far from least, we must stick together. Not only in our hate, confusion and ignorance of what life is all about but in our need to stand up and be noticed for things, like courage and our desire to become warm, loving, human beings.

Please try it with me.
Love, Peace and Faith,
Your friend,
Vicki.

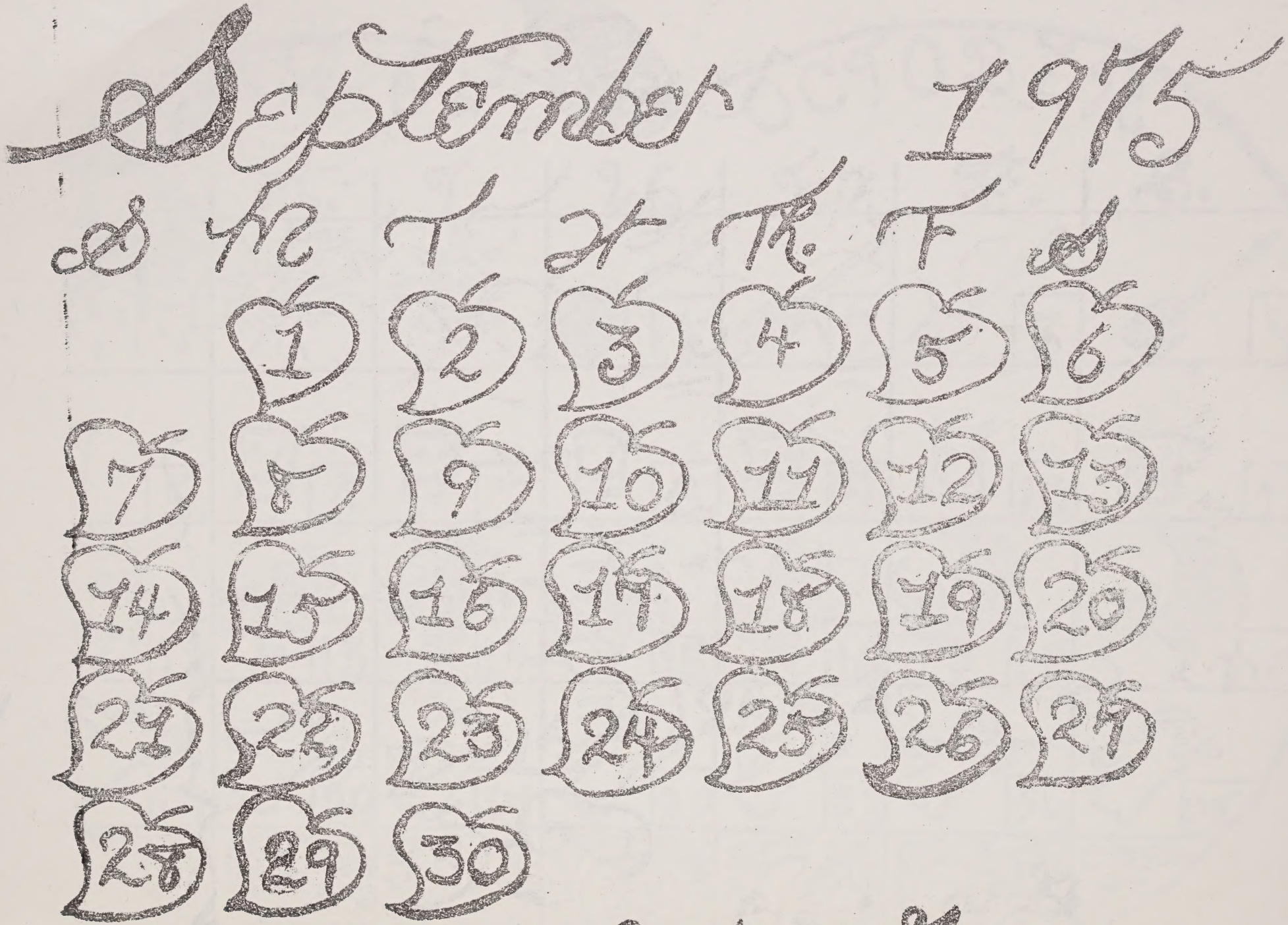
'TIS SAD TO GO.....

Since I have worked at Vanier for the past six weeks, I have really enjoyed myself. Isn't it funny that the people with the kindest hearts always end up behind bars? Because from what I gather from you people, you seem very pleasant and always willing to help. The different backgrounds, the different attitudes, the emotional strees, all are confined in one complex; yet there is a great deal of intimacy within this group of girls and staff. Girls, keep striving to be what you want to be. Grab every opportunity that comes your way, because as long as you're still breathing, you have as good a chance as the next person.

As for the staff, you're like a machine with feelings, woven together. A computer could not have chosen a more qualified group of people, capable of handling any situation that arises with the utmost maturity. I must admit that you have given me a totally different outlook on our correctional services of today.

I would like to thank Mrs. Ives and Mrs. Beaton, the two most wonderful people I have had the opportunity to work under. Also I would like to thank the girls I worked with. GOOD LUCK EVERYONE...

Robert J.H.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